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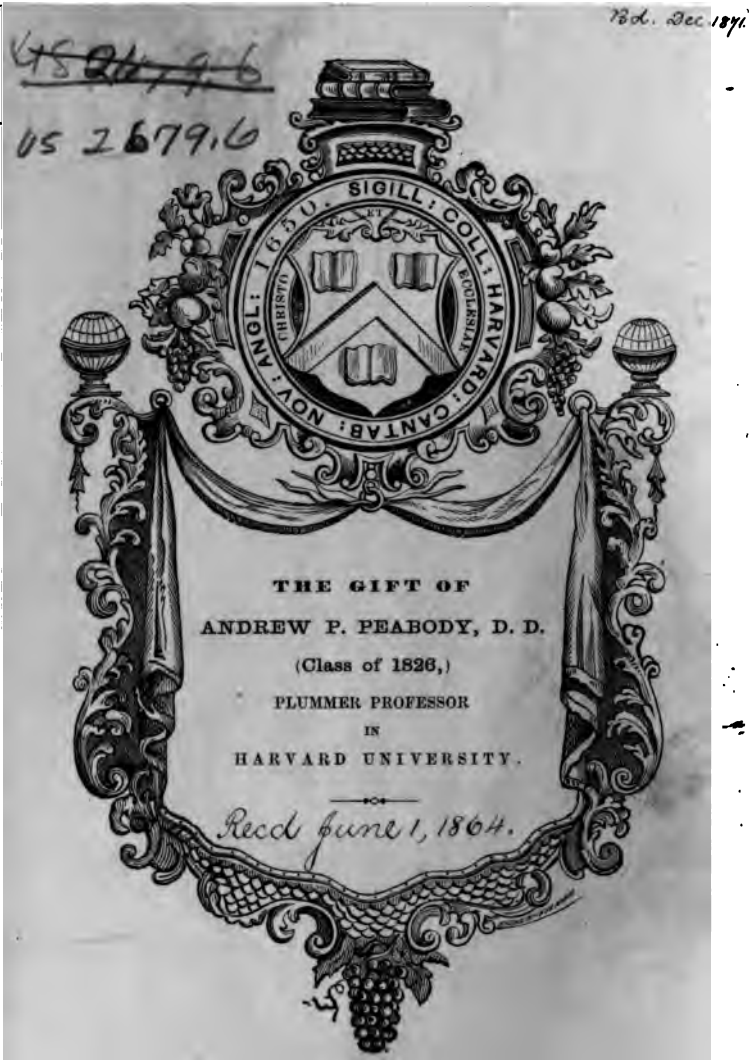
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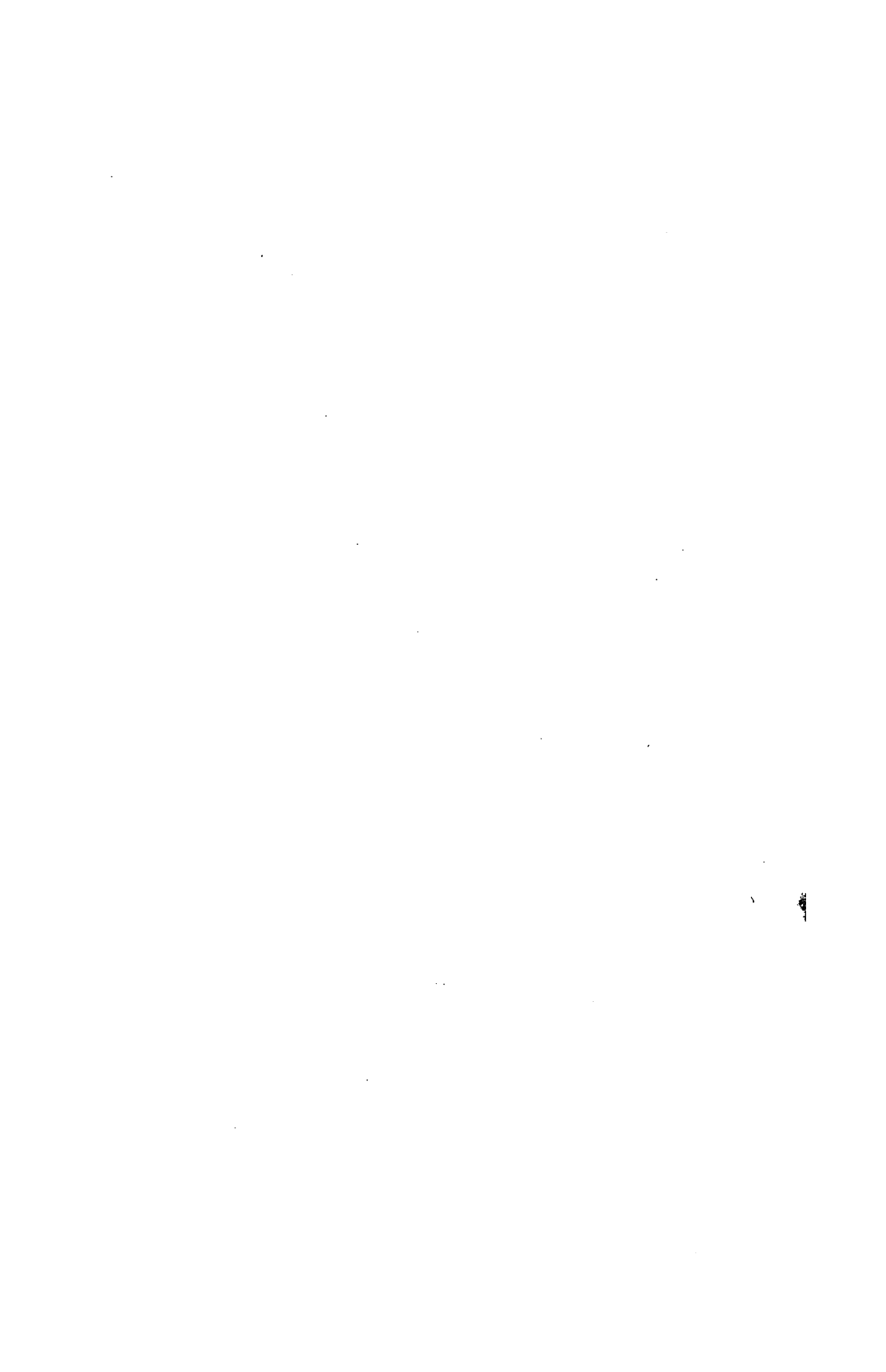
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from the Author

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THE FOUNDATION
OF
THE AMERICAN COLONIES.

A Lecture

DELIVERED BEFORE

THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD,

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BY

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A LECTURE, &c.

COLONY is an ambiguous word: the Phœnician colonies were factories; the Roman colonies were garrisons; the Spanish colonies were gold mines, worked by slaves; France justly placed the products of her Algerian colony in our Exhibition under the heading "Ministry of War." The Greek cities, in the hour of their greatness, founded new cities the counterparts of themselves. England has had the honour, an honour which no disaster can now rend from her, of becoming the parent of new nations. To colonize in this the highest sense is the attribute of freedom. Freedom only can give the necessary self-reliance. In freedom only can the habit of self-government requisite for a young community be formed. The life of the plant must be diffused through all its parts, or its cuttings will not grow.

It is evidently a law of Providence that man shall spread over the earth, make it fruitful, fill it with moral being. When all its powers are brought into play, when it has a civilized nation on every shore, when the instrument is, as it were, fully strung, we know not what harmony may result. The great migrations of mankind are the great epochs of history. In the East, the succession of empires has been formed by the successive descents of warlike tribes on the plains of Mesopotamia, on the countries bordering the Persian gulf, on Hindostan and China. In the West,

the evidence which tends to prove that the Greek and Roman aristocracies were conquering races, tends also to prove that Greece and Rome were the offspring of migrations. The migration of the German tribes into the Roman empire divides ancient from modern, heathen from Christian, history. So far the propelling cause was the want of fresh pastures, or at highest, the restlessness of conscious strength, the sight of ill-defended wealth, the allurements of sunnier lands. The American colonies are the offspring of humanity at a more advanced stage and in a nobler mood. They arose from discontent, not with exhausted pastures, but with institutions that were waxing old, and a faith that was ceasing to be divine. They are monuments of that vast and various movement of humanity, the significance of which is but half expressed by the name of the Reformation. They are still receiving recruits from a movement which is now going on similar to the movement of the sixteenth century, and perhaps not less momentous, though, as we are still in the midst of it, not so clearly understood. The enterprises of the Puritans, like their worship, seemed to our forefathers eccentricities, disturbing for a moment the eternal order of society and the Church; but that which in the eyes of man is eccentricity, is sometimes in the course of Providence the central power.

Before the actual commencement of the Reformation European society began to feel those blind motions of the blood which told that the world's year had turned, and that the middle ages were drawing to their close. A general restlessness shewed itself, among other ways, in maritime adventure. The Columbus of England was John Cabot, borrowed, like

the Columbus of Spain, from a nation which, crushed at home, put forth its greatness in other lands. At the close of the fifteenth century John Cabot, with his more famous son Sebastian, sailed from Bristol, the queen, and now, with its quaint streets and beautiful church, the monument, of English commerce, as English commerce was in its more romantic and perhaps its nobler hour. The adventurers put forth, graciously authorized by King Henry VII. to discover a new world at their own risk and charge, and to hold it as vassals of his crown, landing always at his port of Bristol, and paying him one-fifth of the gains for ever. This royal grant of the earth to man, like the similar grants made by the Papacy, may provoke a smile, but it was the same delusion which in after times cost tears and blood. The reward of the Cabots was the discovery of North America; and Sebastian, in his second voyage, saw the sun of the Arctic summer night shine upon the icebergs of the pole. The great Elizabethan mariners took up the tale. They had two aims,—gold, and the north-west passage to the treasures of the East. Without chart or guide, with only, to use their own phrase, a “merrie wind,” they went forth on voyages which might have appalled a Franklin, as free and fearless as a child at play. Frobisher sailed north of Hudson’s Strait in a bark of twenty-five tons. As he dropped down the Thames, Elizabeth graciously waved her hand to an enterprise for which she had done nothing; a great art, and one which has something to give the Queen her pedestal in history. Gilbert, with a little fleet of boats rather than ships, took possession for England of Newfoundland. As he was on his way homeward, off Cape Breton, in a wild night, the lights of his little vessel disappeared. The

last words he had been heard to say were, "Heaven is as near by sea as it is by land."

Gold lured these adventurers to discover countries, as it lured the alchemist to found a science. In their thirst for gold they filled their ships with yellow earth. Had that yellow earth really been the precious metal, it would have made the finders richer only for an hour, and brought confusion upon commerce and the whole estate of man. The treasures of the precious metals seem to be so laid that new stores may be found only when the circle of trade is greatly enlarged, and the wealth of mankind greatly increased. And if the precious metals are the only or the best circulating medium, and it is necessary that the balance between them and the sum of human wealth should be preserved, this may perhaps be reckoned among the proofs that the earth is adapted to the use of man.

England had a keen race for North America with Spain and France. The name of Espiritu Santo Bay on the coast of Florida commemorates the presence of those devout adventurers who marched with a train of priests, with all the paraphernalia of the mass, with bloodhounds to hunt the natives and chains to bind them. Spanish keels first floated on the imperial waters and among the primeval forests of the Mississippi. The name of Carolina, a settlement planned by Coligny, is a monument fixed by the irony of fate to the treacherous friendship of Charles IX. with the Huguenots on the eve of the St. Bartholomew. North America would have been ill lost to the Spaniard; it would not have been so ill lost to the Huguenot.

But the prize was to be ours. After roaming for a century from Florida to Greenland, English enterprise furled its wandering sail upon a shore which to

its first explorers seemed a paradise, and called the land Virginia, after the Virgin Queen. Raleigh was deep in this venture, as his erratic spirit was deep in all the ventures, commercial, political, military, and literary, of that stirring and prolific time. So far as his own fortunes were concerned, this scheme, like most of his other schemes, was a brilliant failure. In after times North Carolina called her capital by his name—

“Et nunc servat honor sedem tuus, ossaque nomen
Hesperia in magna, siqua est ea gloria, signat,”—

if that can appease the injured, unhappy, and heroic shade.

Virginia had seemed an earthly paradise. But on reading intently the annals of colonization, we soon discover how hard it is for man to fix his dwelling where his fellow has never been; how he sinks and perishes before the face, grand and lovely though it be, of colossal, unreclaimed, trackless nature. The Virginian colonists had among them too many broken gentlemen, tradesmen, and serving-men, too few who were good hands at the axe and spade. They had come to a land of promise in expectation of great and speedy gains, and it seems clear that great and speedy gains are not to be made by felling primeval woods. That the enterprise was not abandoned was due in a great measure to the cheering presence of a wild adventurer, named Captain John Smith, who, turned by his kind relations as a boy upon a stirring world, with ten shillings in his pocket, and that out of his own estate, had, before he was thirty, a tale to tell of wars in the Low Countries and against the Turks, of battles and single combats, of captivities, of wanderings and voyages in all quarters of the globe, as strange

and moving as the tale of Othello ; and who, if he did not win a Desdemona, won a Turkish princess to save him from the bowstring at Adrianople, and an Indian princess to save him from the tomahawk in Virginia. Again and again the settlement was recruited and re-supplied. The original colony of Raleigh quite died out ; and upon the place of its transient abode nature resumed her immemorial reign. The settlement was made good under James I., and at last prospered by the cultivation of tobacco ; so that the royal author of the "Counterblast" unwillingly became the patron of the staple he most abhorred. Even this second colony once re-embarked in despair, and was turned back by the long-boat of the vessel which brought it reinforcements and supplies.

To mankind the success of the Virginian colony proved but a doubtful boon. The tobacco was cultivated first by convicts, then by negro slaves. The Dutch brought the first cargo of negroes to the colony ; but the guilt of this detested traffic does not rest in any especial manner on the Dutch : the whole of commercial Europe was tainted with the sin. Sir John Hawkins, Elizabeth's gallant admiral, was a slaver, and the Crown itself was not ashamed to share his gains. The cities of Spain were seats of the slave trade, as well as of religious persecutions ; and both these deadly diseases of humanity had been stimulated by the Crusades. Even the Puritans of New England were preserved from the contagion rather by their energetic industry as free labourers, and the nobility of their character, than by clear views of right. They denounced kidnapping ; they forbade slavery to be perpetual ; but bondage in itself seemed to them lawful because it was Jewish. It is an addi-

tional reason for dealing carefully with the subject of Jewish history and the Jewish law, when we see them wrested as they are to the defence of slavery, with all its abysses of cruelty and lust. To put the case as low as possible, Can those who support slavery by Jewish precedents say that the Jews for whom Moses legislated possessed that definite conviction of the immortality of the soul, that clear conception of the spiritual life and of the spiritual relations of man to man, on which the loathsomeness of slave-owning in a Christian's eyes principally depends? Nor, again, must slave-owners fancy they are counterparts of English gentlemen. It has been remarked that English gentlemen, when owners of West Indian property, shrank with a half-honourable inconsistency from living on their estates and plying the trade of the slave-owner, though they did not shrink from taking the slave-owner's gains. To continue a slave-owner the American must be false, not only to Christianity, but to all that is proud and high in the great race from which he springs. The growth of trade has necessarily rendered the system more mercenary, cold-blooded, and vile. It was milder and more patriarchal in the hands of the Virginian gentlemen of earlier days. Washington himself was a Virginian slave-owner, the best of slave-owners, and therefore a strong though temperate advocate for the immediate abolition of the slave trade, and the progressive emancipation of the slaves. Jefferson, the first President of the party which now upholds slavery, and, like Washington, a Virginian proprietor, also spoke strong words, uttered terrible warnings, though political passion made him partly faithless to the cause. England indeed owes the American slave-owner charity and

patience, for she was the full accomplice, if she was not the author of his guilt. In the treaty of Utrecht we bargained with Spain for a share in the negro trade; and Queen Anne mentioned this article in her speech to Parliament as one of the trophies of a war undertaken to save the liberties of Europe. It is true the spirit of William surviving in his councillors made the war, the spirit of Bolingbroke made the peace. But long after the peace of Utrecht, down to the very eve of our rupture with the American colonies, we encouraged, we enforced the trade, and in our West Indian slave colonies we kept up the focus of the pestilence. Still we have purged ourselves of the stain. The American slave states were in their own hands, they were fresh in the enjoyment of their own liberties, the declaration of the Rights of Man was on their lips, the case was not desperate, the cause was earnestly pleaded before them, when they in effect determined that they would let slavery be as it had been. Then their good angel left their side.

There is in America another race, less injured than the negro, but scarcely less unhappy. The first English explorers of Virginia brought word that they had "been entertained by the Indians with all love and kindness, and with as much bounty, after their manner, as they could possibly devise; and that they found them a people most gentle, loving, and faithful, void of all guile and treason, and such as lived after the manner of the golden age." These loving entertainments and this golden age were soon followed by an iron age of suspicion, hatred, encroachment, border warfare, treacherous and murderous on-falls of the weaker on the stronger, bloody vengeance of the stronger on the weaker. And now it seems

there will soon be nothing left of the disinherited race but the strange music of its names mingling with the familiar names of England in the hills and rivers of its ancient heritage. Yet its blood is not on the heads of those who dwell in its room. They, indeed, have turned the wilderness over which it wandered into the cities and corn-fields of a great nation; and in so doing they have obeyed the law of Providence, which has given the earth, not for the dominion, but for the support of man. They conjured the phantom of the Indian hunter's proprietary right by the forms of treaty and purchase. They did not seek to exterminate, they did not seek to enslave; they did seek to civilize and convert. Protestantism in its noblest and purest form, and the better spirit of Jesuitism,—the spirit, that is, of Xavier and not of Loyola,—vied with each other in doing all that religion could do to elevate and save. The marriage of an Indian princess with an Englishman was hailed as an auspicious pledge of the union of the two races under one name and with one God. But the fate of savages brought abruptly into contest with civilization has everywhere been the same. Never, says an eminent writer, have they been reclaimed except by religion. It is the exception that is doubtful. Where are the reclaimed, or rather the domesticated, savages of Paraguay, whose dwindling numbers, even under the Jesuit rule, were kept up by decoying recruits from neighbouring tribes? What do we hear as to the probable fate of the reclaimed savages of New Zealand? It seems as though to pass at a bound from the lowest step in the scale to the highest were not given to man; as though to attempt it, even with the best aid, were to die. Mere savages the Indians seem

to have been, though America has filled the void of romance in her history with their transfigured image. They knew the simpler arts of life; they had great acuteness of sense, and fortitude equalled only by their cruelty; but they lived and died creatures of the hour, caring not for the past or for the future, keeping no record of their forefathers, not storing thought, without laws and government but those of a herd, using the imagery of sense, their seeming eloquence, only because they lacked the language of the mind, having no religion but a vague awe, which fixed on everything terrible or marvellous as a god. Yet they did not exist in vain. Without their presence, their aid, slight as it was, their guidance, the heart of the wanderer would perhaps have utterly sunk in that vast solitude, then a world away from home and succour. The animal perfection of their lower nature enabled them to struggle with and thread the wilderness, the horrors of which their want of the finer nature made them all the more fit to bear. They were the pioneers of a higher state of things; and perhaps we, heirs as we seem to ourselves of all the ages, may to the late heirs of our age seem no more.

Virginia then went prosperously, as it was thought, upon her course, the destined centre and head of the slave states. Her own society and that of the adjoining states, which took their colour from her, was old English society, as far as might be, in a new land. The royal governors were little kings. There was no aristocracy as in England, but there was a landed gentry with aristocratic pride. There was, down to the Revolution, the English rule of primogeniture in the succession to land. The Church of England

was the Church of the colony, half established, and a little inclined to intolerance. In Virginia many of the Cavaliers took refuge in their evil hour. In Virginia Charles II. reigned while he was proscribed in England. In Virginia a royal governor could say, as late as 1671, "I thank God there are no free schools nor printing, and I hope we shall not have them these hundred years; for learning has brought disobedience and misery and sects into the world, and printing has divulged them, and libels against the best government. God keep us from both."

Meantime, far north, where the eastern mountains of America press the sea, in a bracing climate, on a soil which demands free labour, another colony had been formed, of other materials, and with a different aim. Of a poor Puritan teacher, more truly than of the royal restorer of Virginia, might it have been prophesied,—

"Wherever the bright sun of heaven shall shine,
His honour and the greatness of his name
Shall be, and make new nations."

When the Presbyterian James mounted the throne, the persecuted Puritans thought a better day had dawned. They were quickly undeceived. The sagacious eye of the royal Solomon at once discerned how much the throne would be strengthened and secured by that compact alliance with a party in the Church, which soon laid Church and Throne together in the dust. At the Hampton Court Conference he revealed at once his purpose and his nature by speaking foul, unkingly words to the honoured leaders of that great party whose heroic energy, shining forth in famous soldiers and famous statesmen, had saved England and the English crown from Spain. Under the vigil-

ant eye and zealous hand of Bancroft the persecution grew hotter and more searching than before. The tale that follows has been often told. A Puritan congregation on the confines of Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, and Nottinghamshire, whose teacher's name was Robinson, harassed beyond endurance, resolved to leave all they had and fly to Holland, there to worship God in peace. They accordingly attempted to escape, were arrested, set free again; again they attempted to escape, were pursued by the agents of persecution to the shore, and part of them seized, but again with difficulty let go. In Holland the congregation dwelt twelve years, devout, industrious, blameless, no man, said the Dutch magistrates, bringing suit or accusation against them; the living image of that for which we gaze into the darkness of the first two centuries in vain. But the struggle for bread was hard. The children grew sickly and bent with toil before their time. There was war in Germany. The cities of the Low Countries were full of loose and roving soldiery, and Holland itself was torn by the bloody struggle between the Arminians and the Gomarists. Some of the younger members of the congregation fell into evil courses, enlisted, went to sea. Then with prayer and fasting the congregation turned their thoughts to the New World. The Dutch, learning their intention, bid high for them, knowing well the value of such settlers. But that which they did they would do as Englishmen, and for the honour of their own land. They made their suit through friends in England to the King and the Virginia Company; spoke dutifully of the royal authority, meekly of the authority of bishops; represented that, though the enterprise was dangerous,—and

to peasants like them it was dangerous indeed,—though the honour of it might be bought with life, yet in their case, no common one, it would be rightly undertaken, and they were not unfit to undertake it. “We are well weaned from the delicate milk of our mother country, and inured to the difficulties of a strange land. The people are industrious and frugal. We are knit together in a most sacred covenant of the Lord, of the violation whereof we make great conscience, and by virtue whereof we hold ourselves strictly tied to all care of each other’s good and of the whole. It is not with us as with men whom small things can discourage.” The Virginia Company gave hesitating assistance and a worthless patent. The King and the Bishops held out fair hopes of beneficent neglect. “Ungrateful Americans!” cried a minister in a debate on the Stamp Act. “Planted by our care,” cried another minister, “nourished up by our indulgence, will they grudge to contribute their mite to relieve us from the heavy burden we lie under?”

Through the solemn sadness of the parting from Delft haven shone the glory of great things to come. History reveals abysses which, if her evidence were all, might make us doubt which power it was that ruled the world. But history bears steady witness to the lasting ascendancy of moral over physical force. All rhetoric apart, those masters of thirty legions, who with so much blood and din shift to and fro the boundaries of kingdoms, go to dust, and, saving the evil they leave behind them, are as though they had never been. But these poor peasants, at small charge to the Virginia Company, became in a real sense the founders of a new world.

It was not from Delft haven but from Southampton

that they finally embarked. England deserved that honour at their hands, for they went forth, though not from the English Government, from the heart of the English people. Of their two little vessels the "Speedwell" leaked, and was forced to put back, with the weaker bodies and fainter spirits in her. The "Mayflower" went on her way alone; she went safely through storms, carrying greater fortunes than those of Cæsar. On Saturday the 11th of November, 1620, she dropped her anchor on a wintry coast; and next day the Puritan kept his first Sabbath in his own land. He kept that Sabbath sacred in his extremity; and amidst the keen race for wealth his descendants keep it sacred still. The welcome of the Puritans to their home was the wilderness in all its horrors, chequered by a few signs of Indian life, and soon by a volley of Indian arrows; snow, frost that made the wet clothes of the explorers stiff as iron; hunger that drove them to feed on shell-fish; deadly fever and consumption. More than half the number died: the survivors had scarce strength to bury the dead by the sea and conceal the graves, lest the Indians might perceive how the colony was weakened. The mortal struggle lasted for two years. Yet this colony did not, like Virginia, require to be re-founded, not even to be re-victualled. "It is not with us as with men whom small things can discourage." The third summer brought a good harvest, and the victory was won. "Let it not be grievous to you," said the Puritans in England,— "let it not be grievous to you that you have been instruments to break the ice for others. The honour shall be yours to the world's end."

Before the pilgrims landed, they by a solemn instrument founded the Puritan republic. The tone of

this instrument and the success of its authors may afford a lesson to revolutionists who sever the present from the past with the guillotine, fling the illustrious dead out of their tombs, and begin history again with the year one. These men had been wronged as much as the Jacobins.

“In the name of God. Amen. We whose names are underwritten, the loyal subjects of our dread Sovereign Lord King James, by the grace of God of Great Britain and Ireland, defender of the faith, &c., having undertaken, for the glory of God and advancement of the Christian faith, and honour of our king and country, a voyage to plant the first colony in the northern parts of Virginia, do by these presents solemnly and mutually, in the presence of God and of one another, covenant and combine ourselves together into a civil body politic for our better ordering and preservation, and for the furtherance of the ends aforesaid; and by virtue hereof to exact, constitute, and frame such just and equal laws, ordinances and acts, constitutions and offices, from time to time, as shall be thought most meet for the general good of the colony, unto which we promise all due submission and obedience.” And then follows the roll of plebeian names, to which the Roll of Battle Abbey is a poor record of nobility.

There are points in history at which the spirit which moves the whole shews itself more clearly through the outward frame. This is one of them. Here we are passing from the feudal age of privilege and force, to the age of due submission and obedience, to just and equal offices and laws, for our better ordering and preservation. In this political covenant of the pilgrim fathers lies the American Declaration of

Independence. From the American Declaration of Independence was borrowed the French Declaration of the Rights of Man. France, rushing ill-prepared, though with overweening confidence, on the great problems of the eighteenth century, shattered not her own hopes alone; but nearly at the same moment the Puritan Republic, breaking the last slight link that bound it to feudal Europe, placed modern society firmly and tranquilly on its new foundation. To the free States of America we owe our best assurance that the oldest, the most famous, the most cherished of human institutions are not the life, nor would their fall be the death, of social man; that all which comes of Charlemagne, and all which comes of Constantine, might go to the tombs of Charlemagne and Constantine, and yet social duty and affection, religion and worship, free obedience to good government, free reverence for just laws, continue as before. They who have achieved this, have little need to talk of Bunker's Hill.

Not that republicanism in New England is all its founders expected it to be. "Our popularity," said the framers of the popular constitution of Rhode Island,—“our popularity shall not, as some conjecture it will, prove an anarchy, and so a common tyranny; for we are exceedingly desirous to preserve every man safe in his person, name, and estate.” That might be said confidently of a quiet agricultural community of small proprietors, which could not be so confidently said of great trading communities with vast and restless cities. But the Puritan institutions have had other difficulties to contend with, for which fair allowance must be made. The stream of English and German, the torrent of Irish

emigration, relieving other countries of a great danger, casts on the Republic a multitude of discontented and lawless spirits, far removed from the restraining influences of their native land, from the eye of neighbours, friends, and kinsmen, from the church-bells of their home. The incongruous and fatal union of the free with the slave States, for which those who drove them all to combine against English tyranny are partly responsible, has brought upon the constitution the tremendous strain of the great Slavery question, and led to that deadly alliance between the Southern slave-owner and the Northern anarchist which calls itself the Democratic party. The rupture with the English monarchy gave the States a violent bias towards democracy, which they were far from exhibiting before; and set up the revolutionary doctrine of the sovereign people, which tends as much as any other despotic doctrine to annul the greatest step in the progress of humanity by placing will, though it be the will of the many, above reason and the law. To crown all, comes the poisonous influence of the elective presidency, the great prize of restless and profligate ambition; the fountain of envy, malignity, violence, and corruption; the object of factions otherwise as devoid of object and of meaning as Neri and Bianchi, Caravat and Shanavest; in their fierce struggles for which American statesmen have too often shewn, that if public life is the noblest of all callings it is the vilest of all trades. The Diet of the Swiss Confederation, presided over by the first magistrate of the leading canton for the year, would have furnished a happier model. The character of Washington is one of the glories of our race; but was he a man of genius? Did he see that he had to

frame a constitution for a confederacy of republics, not for a nation? Did not the image of the English monarchy, something of the state of which he thought it his duty as President to keep, hover too much before his eyes? Yet, as he looked for the progressive abolition of slavery, he must be acquitted of so terrible an error as an attempt to make one nation of the slave and free. Happily, political institutions kill as seldom as they cure; and the real current of a great nation's life may run calmly beneath the seething and frothy surface which alone meets our eyes.

With popular government the Puritans established popular education. They are the great authors of the system of common schools. They founded a college, too, and that in dangerous and pinching times. Nor did their care fail, nor is it failing, to produce an intelligent people. A great literature is a thing of slow growth everywhere. The growth of American literature was retarded at first by Puritan severity, which forced even philosophy to put on a theological garb, and veiled the Necessarianism of Mr. Mill in the Calvinism of Jonathan Edwards. Now, perhaps, its growth is retarded by the sudden burst of commercial activity and wealth, the development of which our monopolies long restrained. One day, perhaps, this wealth may be used as nobly as the wealth of Florence; but for some time it will be spent in somewhat coarse pleasures by those who have suddenly won it. It is spent in somewhat coarse pleasures by those who have suddenly won it at Liverpool and Manchester, as well as at New York. One praise, at any rate, American literature may claim; it is *pure*. Here the spirit of the pilgrims still holds its own. The public opinion of a free country is a restraining as well as a moving

power. On the other hand, despotism, political or ecclesiastical, does not extinguish human liberty. That it may take away the liberty of reason, it gives the liberty of sense. It says to man, Do what you will, sin and shrive yourself; but eschew political improvement, and turn away your thoughts from truth.

The history of the Puritan Church in New England is one of enduring glory, of transient shame. Of transient shame, because there was a moment of intolerance and persecution; of enduring glory, because intolerance and persecution instantly gave way to perfect liberty of conscience and free allegiance to the truth. The founders of New England were Independents. When they went forth, their teacher had solemnly charged them to follow him no further than they had seen him follow his Master. He had pointed to the warning example of Churches which fancied that because Calvin and Luther were great and shining lights in their times, therefore there could be no light vouchsafed to man after theirs. "I beseech you remember it; it is an article of your Church covenant, that you be ready to receive whatever truth shall be made known to you from the written word of God." It was natural that the Puritan settlement should at first be a Church rather than a State. To have given a share in its lands or its political franchise to those who were not of its communion would have been to make the receiver neither rich nor powerful, and the giver, as he might well think, poor and weak indeed. But the Communion grew into an Establishment; and the Puritan Synod, as well as the Council of Trent, must needs forget that it was the child of change, and build its barrier, though not a very

unyielding one, across the river which flows for ever. Rhode Island, Connecticut, New Hampshire, were partly secessions from Massachusetts, led by those who longed for perfect freedom ; and in fairness to Massachusetts it must be said, that among those seceders were some in whose eyes freedom herself was scarcely free. The darkness of the Middle Ages must bear the blame if not a few were dazzled by the sudden return of light. The name of Providence, the capital of Rhode Island, is the thank-offering of Roger Williams, to whose wayward and disputatious spirit much may be forgiven if he first clearly proclaimed, and first consistently practised, the perfect doctrine of liberty of conscience, the sole guarantee for real religion, the sole trustworthy guardian of the truth. That four Quakers should have suffered death in a colony founded by fugitives from a persecution is a stain on the history of the free Churches of America, like the stain on the robe of Marcus Aurelius, like the stain on the escutcheon of the Black Prince. It is true there was no inquisition, no searching of conscience ; that the persecutors warned their victims away, and sought to be quit of them, not to take their blood ; that the Quakers thrust themselves on their fate in their frenzied desire for martyrdom. All this at most renders less deep by one degree the dye of religious murder. The weapon was instantly wrested from the hand of fanaticism by the humane instinct of a free people ; and the blood of those four victims sated in the new world the demon who, in the old world, between persecutions and religious wars, has drunk the blood of millions, and is scarcely sated yet. If the robe of religion in the new world was less rich than in the old, it was all but pure of those red stains,

compared with which the stains upon the robe of worldly ambition, scarlet though they be, are white as wool. In the new world there was no Inquisition, no St. Bartholomew, no Thirty Years' War : in the new world there was no Voltaire. If we would do Voltaire justice, criminal and fatal as his destructive levity was, we have only to read his "Cry of Innocent Blood," and we shall see that the thing he assailed was not Christianity, much less God. The American sects, indeed, soon added to the number of those variations of the Protestant Churches, which, contrasted with the majestic unity of Rome, furnished a proud argument to Bossuet. Had Bossuet lived to see what came forth at the Revolution from under the unity of the Church of France, he might have doubted whether unity was so united ; as, on the other hand, if he had seen the practical union of the free Churches of America for the weightier matters of religion, which De Tocqueville observed, he might have doubted whether variation was so various. It would have been too much to ask a Bossuet to consider whether, looking to the general dealings of Providence with man, the variations of free and conscientious inquirers are an absolute proof that free and conscientious inquiry is not the road to religious truth.

In Maryland, Roman Catholicism itself, having tasted of the cup it had made others drink to the dregs, and being driven to the asylum of oppressed consciences, proclaimed the principle of toleration. In Maryland the Church of Alva and Torquemada grew, bloodless and blameless ; and thence it has gone forth, as it was in its earlier and more apostolic hour, to minister to the now large Roman Catholic population of the United States whatever of good and true,

in the great schism of humanity, may have remained on the worse and falser side. For in Maryland it had no overgrown wealth and power to defend against the advance of truth. Bigotry, the mildest of all the vices, has the worst things laid to her charge. That wind of free discipline which, to use Bacon's image, winnows the chaff of error from the grain of truth, is in itself welcome to man as the breeze of evening. It is when it threatens to winnow away, not the chaff of error alone, but princely bishoprics of Strasburg and Toledo, that its breath becomes pestilence, and Christian love is compelled to torture and burn the infected sheep, in order to save from infection the imperilled flock.

There have been wild religious sects in America. But cannot history shew sects as wild in the old world? Is not Mormonism itself fed by the wild apocalyptic visions, and the dreams of a kinder and happier social state, which haunt the peasantry in the more neglected parts of our own country? Have not the wildest and most fanatical sects in history arisen when the upper classes have turned religion into policy, and left the lower classes, who knew nothing of policy, to guide or misguide themselves into the truth?

New England was fast peopled by the flower of the Puritan party, and the highest Puritan names were blended with its history. Among its elective governors was Vane, even then wayward as pure, even then suspected of being more Republican than Puritan. It saw also the darker presence of Hugh Peters. While the day went hard with freedom and the Protestant cause in England, the tide set steadily westward; it turned, when the hour of retaliation came, to the great

Armageddon of Westminster and Naseby; after the Restoration it set to the West again. In New England Puritanism continued to reign with all that was solemn, austere, strange in its spirit, manners, language, garb, when in England its dominion, degenerating into tyranny, had met with a half-merited overthrow. In New England three of the judges of Charles I. found a safer refuge than Holland could afford, and there one of them lived to see the scales once more hung out in heaven, the better part of his own cause triumphant once more, and William sit on the Protector's throne.

Among the emigrants were clergymen, Oxford and Cambridge scholars, high-born men and women, for in that moving age the wealthiest often vied with the poorest in indifference to worldly interest and devotion to a great cause. Even peers of the Puritan party thought of becoming citizens of Massachusetts, but had enough of the peer in them to desire still to have an hereditary seat in the councils of the State. Massachusetts answered this demand by the hand of one who had himself made a great sacrifice, and without republican bluster; "When God blesseth any branch of any noble or generous family with a spirit and gifts fit for government, it would be a taking of God's name in vain to put such a talent under a bushel, and a sin against the honour of magistracy to neglect such in our public elections. But if God should not delight to furnish some of their posterity with gifts fit for magistracy, we should enforce them rather to reproach and prejudice than exalt them to honour, if we should call those forth whom God doth not to public authority." The Venetian seems to be the only great aristocracy in history the origin of which is not trace-

able to the accident of conquest ; and the origin even of the Venetian aristocracy may perhaps be traced to the accident of prior settlement and the contagious example of neighbouring states. That which has its origin in accident may prove useful and live long ; it may even survive itself under another name, as the Roman patriciate, as the Norman nobility survived themselves under the form of a mixed aristocracy of birth, political influence, and wealth. But it can flourish only in its native soil. Transplant it, and it dies. The native soil of feudal aristocracy is a feudal kingdom, with great estates held together by the law or custom of primogeniture in succession to land. The New England colonies rejected primogeniture with the other institutions of the Middle Ages, and adopted the anti-feudal custom of equal inheritance, under the legal and ancestral name of gavelkind. It was Saxon England emerging from the Norman rule. This rule of succession to property, and the equality with which it is distributed, are the basis of the republican institutions of New England. To transfer those institutions to countries where that basis does not exist, would be almost as absurd as to transfer to modern society the Roman laws of the Twelve Tables, or the Capitularies of Charlemagne.

In New York, New Jersey, Delaware, settlements formed by the energy of Dutch and Swedish Protestantism have been absorbed by the greater energy of the Anglo-Saxons. The rising empire of his faith beyond the Atlantic did not fail to attract the soaring imagination of Gustavus ; it was in his thoughts when he set out for Lützen. But the most remarkable of the American colonies, after the New England group, is Pennsylvania. We are rather surprised, on looking

at the portrait of the gentle and eccentric founder of the Society of Friends, to see a very comely youth, dressed in complete armour. Penn was a highly educated and accomplished gentleman, heir to a fine estate, and to all the happiness and beauty, which he was not without a heart to feel, of English manorial life. "You are an ingenious gentleman," said a magistrate before whom he was brought for his Quaker extravagances, "why do you make yourself unhappy by associating with such a simple people?" In the old world he could only hope to found a society, in the new world he might hope to found a nation, of which the law should be love. The constitution he framed for Philadelphia, on pure republican principles, was to be "for the support of power in reverence with the people, and to secure the people from the abuse of power. For liberty without obedience is confusion, and obedience without liberty is slavery." He excluded himself and his heirs from the founder's bane of authority over his own creation. It is as a reformer of criminal law, perhaps, that he has earned his brightest and most enduring fame. The codes and customs of feudal Europe were lavish of servile or plebeian blood. In the republic of New England the life of every man was precious, and the criminal law was far more humane than that of Europe, though tainted with the dark Judaism of the Puritans, with the cruel delusion which they shared with the rest of the world on the subject of witchcraft, and with their overstrained severity in punishing crimes of sense. Penn confined capital punishment to the crimes of treason and murder. Two centuries afterwards, the arguments of Romilly and the legislation of Peel convinced Penn's native country that these reveries of

his, the dictates of wisdom which sprang from his heart, were sober truth. We are now beginning to see the reality of another of his dreams, the dream of making the prison not a gaol only, but a place of reformation. Of the two errors in government, that of treating men like angels and that of treating them like beasts, he did something to shew that the one to which he leaned was the less grave, for Philadelphia grew up like an olive-branch beneath his fostering hand.

In the Carolinas, the old settlement of Coligny was re-peopled with English, Scotch, Irish, Germans, Swiss, the motley elements which will blend with Hollander and Swede to form in America the most mixed, and on one theory the greatest, of all races. The philosophic hand of Locke attempted to create for this colony a highly elaborate constitution, judged at the time a masterpiece of political art. His philosophic hand might almost as well have attempted to create a full-grown tree. Georgia bears the name of the second king of that line whose third king was to lose all. Its philanthropic founder, Oglethorpe, struggled to exclude slavery, but an evil policy and the neighbourhood of the West Indies baffled his endeavours. Here Wesley preached, here Whitfield; and Whitfield, too anxious to avoid offence that he might be permitted to save souls, paid a homage to the system of slavery and made a sophistical apology for it, which weigh heavily against the merits of a great apostle of the poor.

For some time all the colonies, whatever their nominal government, whether they were under the Crown, under single proprietors, under companies, or under free charters, enjoyed, in spite of chronic nego-

tiation and litigation with the powers in England, a large measure of practical independence. James I. was weak ; Charles I. and Laud had soon other things to think of ; the Long Parliament were disposed to be arrogant, but the Protector was magnanimous ; and finally, Charles II., careless of everything on this side the water, was still more careless of everything on that side, and Clarendon was not too stiff for prerogative to give a liberal charter to a colony of which he was himself a patentee. Royal governors, indeed, sometimes tried to over-act the king, and the folly of Sir William Berkeley, governor of Virginia, all but forestalled, and well would it have been if it had quite forestalled, the folly of Lord North. With this exception the colonies rested content and proud beneath the shadow of England, and no thought of a general confederation or absolute independence ever entered into their minds. As they grew rich we tried to interfere with their manufactures and monopolize their trade. It was unjust and it was foolish. The proof of its folly is the noble trade that has sprung up between us since our government lost all power of checking the course of nature. But this was the injustice and the folly of the time. No such excuse can be made for the attempt to tax the colonies,—in defiance of the first principles of English government,—begun by narrow-minded incompetence and continued by insensate pride. It is miserable to see what true affection was there flung away. Persecuted and excited, the founders of New England, says one of their historians, did not cry Farewell Rome, Farewell Babylon ! They cried, Farewell dear England ! And this was their spirit even far into the fatal quarrel. “ You have been told,” they said to the British Parliament,

after the subversion of the chartered liberties of Massachusetts, "you have been told that we are seditious, impatient of government, and desirous of independence. Be assured that these are not facts, but calumnies. Permit us to be as free as yourselves, and we shall ever esteem a union with you to be our greatest glory and our greatest happiness; we shall ever be ready to contribute all in our power to the welfare of the whole empire; we shall consider your enemies as our enemies, and your interest as our own. But if you are determined that your ministers shall wantonly sport with the rights of mankind; if neither the voice of justice, the dictates of law, the principles of the constitution, nor the suggestions of humanity, can restrain your hands from shedding human blood in such an impious cause, we must then tell you that we will never submit to be 'hewers of wood and drawers of water' for any nation in the world." What was this but the voice of those who framed the Petition of Right and the Great Charter? Franklin alone, perhaps, of the leading Americans, by the dishonourable publication of an exasperating correspondence, which he had improperly obtained, shared with Grenville, Townshend, and Lord North the guilt of bringing this great disaster on the English race. There could be but one issue to a war in which England was fighting against her better self, or rather in which England fought on one side and a corrupt ministry and parliament on the other. The parliament of that day was not national; and though the nation was excited by the war when once commenced, it by no means follows that a national parliament would have commenced it. The great national leader rejoiced that the Americans had resisted. But disease, or that

worse enemy which hovers so close to genius, deprived us of Chatham at the most critical hour. One thing there was in that civil war on which both sides may look back with pride. In spite of deep provocation and intense bitterness, in spite of the unwarrantable employment of foreign troops and the infamous employment of Indians on our side, and the exasperating interference of the French on the side of the Americans, the struggle was conducted on the whole with great humanity. Compared with the French Revolution, it was a contest between men with noble natures and a fight between infuriated beasts. Something, too, it is that from that struggle should have arisen the character of Washington, to teach all ages, and especially those which are inclined to worship violence, the greatness of moderation and civil duty. It has been truly said, that there is one spectacle more grateful to Heaven than a good man in adversity—a good man successful in a great cause. Deeper happiness cannot be conceived than that of the years which Washington passed at Mount Vernon, looking back upon a life of arduous command held without a selfish thought, and laid down without a stain.

The loss of the American colonies was perhaps, in itself, a gain to both countries. It was a gain as it emancipated commerce, and gave free course to those reciprocal streams of wealth which a restrictive policy had forbidden to flow. It was a gain as it put an end to an obsolete tutelage, which tended to prevent America from learning betimes to walk alone, while it gave England only the puerile and somewhat dangerous pleasure of reigning over those whom she did not and could not govern, but whom she was tempted to harass and insult. A source of military strength colonies can

hardly be. You prevent them from forming proper military establishments of their own, and you drag them into your quarrels at the price of undertaking their defence. The inauguration of free trade was in fact the renunciation of the only solid object for which our ancestors clung to an invidious and perilous supremacy, and exposed the heart of England by scattering her fleets and armies over the globe. It was not the loss of the colonies, but the quarrel, that was one of the greatest, perhaps the greatest, disaster that ever befell the English race. Who would not give up Blenheim and Waterloo, if only the two Englands could have parted from each other in kindness and in peace; if our statesmen could have had the wisdom to say to the Americans generously and at the right season, "You are Englishmen like ourselves; be, for your own happiness and our honour, like ourselves, a nation?" But English statesmen, with all their greatness, have seldom known how to anticipate necessity; too often the sentence of history on their policy has been that it was wise, just and generous, but "too late." Too often have they waited for the teaching of disaster. Time will heal this, like other wounds. In signing away his own empire over America, George III. did not sign away the empire of English liberty, of English law, of English literature, of English religion, of English blood, or of the English tongue. But though the wound will heal, and that it may heal ought to be the earnest desire of the whole English name, history can never cancel the fatal page which robs England of half the glory and half the happiness of being the mother of a great nation.



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